Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity
FY2015 Regional Innovation Strategies Program

Federal Agency Name	Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)
Funding Opportunity Title	FY2015 Regional Innovation Strategies Program
Announcement Type and Date	Initial FY2015 Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) announcement publishing EDA's application submission requirements and review procedures for applications received under EDA's Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) Program as authorized by the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 §27, 15 U.S.C. §3722 (2006 & Supp. IV 2010), *as amended by* the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act of 2014 §705, Pub. L. No. 113-235 (Dec. 16, 2014) [hereinafter SWTIA §27], effective August 4, 2015
Funding Opportunity Number	EDA-HDQ-OIE-2015-2004566
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CDFA) Numbers	11.020 Cluster Grants
Dates	The deadline for receipt of applications is **11:59 P.M. EASTERN TIME ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2015**. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed or considered. Applications will only be accepted electronically through www.grants.gov (Grants.gov). Applicants are advised to carefully read the application and submission information provided in Section 4 of this FFO.
Funding Opportunity Description	EDA is committed to fostering connected, innovation-centric economic regions which support commercialization and entrepreneurship. *See* SWTIA §27. Working with regions across the country to develop regional innovation strategies, including regional innovation clusters, is a Strategic Goal of the DOC's FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan and a keystone of the Secretary of Commerce's commitment to building globally competitive regions. As part of this strategy, funding is available for capacity-building activities that include Proof of Concept Centers and Commercialization Centers as well as scaling of existing commercialization programs and centers; and supporting opportunities to close the funding gap for early-stage companies. Under the Regional Innovation Strategies Program, EDA is soliciting applications for two separate competitions: 1. 2015 i6 Challenge Grants; and 2. Seed Fund Support (SFS) Grants. Applicants may, but are not required to, submit proposals for more than one competition under the RIS Program. Note that, except for the 2014 RIS Program, previous grants and competitions administered by EDA have been governed by the Public Works and Economic

	Development Act of 1965, as amended. 42 U.S.C. §3121 *et seq.* [hereinafter PWEDA]. The 2015 RIS Program is authorized under SWTIA §27, which does not include a requirement that grants be focused on economically distressed communities.

Eligible Applicants	EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding. Eligible applicants for EDA financial assistance under this FFO include:
	
	1. A State;
	2. An Indian tribe;
	3. A city or other political subdivision of a State;
	4. An entity that—
	    a. is a nonprofit organization, an institution of higher education, a public-private partnership, a science or research park, a Federal laboratory, or an economic development organization or similar entity; and
	    b. has an application that is supported by a State or a political subdivision of a State; or
	5. A consortium of any of the entities described in subparagraphs (1) through (4).

Informational Webinar	An informational webinar for this FFO is available for viewing at www.eda.gov.
Award Notification	Subject to the availability of funding, successful applicants should expect to receive grant award notification approximately 120 days from the application closing date set forth in this FFO.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT
FY2015 REGIONAL INNOVATION STRATEGIES PROGRAM

1. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

   a. Overview

This Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) announcement sets out the application submission and review procedures for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) Program.

Regional economic vitality is best accomplished through multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaborations that draw upon public, corporate, university, nonprofit, and philanthropic resources. Regional innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems—which have a culture of idea generation, leadership, trust, openness to foraging new partnerships with disparate parties, entrepreneurial development, investment capital, and a large pool of accomplished managers—often fuel these partnerships and collaborations. Robust, sustainable regional innovation ecosystems help drive national competitiveness.

EDA is committed to fostering connected, innovation-centric economic sectors which support commercialization and entrepreneurship as described in the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 §27, 15 U.S.C. §3722 (2006 & Supp. IV 2010), *as amended by* the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act of 2014 §705, Pub. L. No. 113-235 (Dec. 16, 2014) [hereinafter SWTIA §27]. The Department of Commerce (DOC) FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan sets forth the strategic goal of working within and across ecosystems throughout the country to develop regional innovation strategies, including regional innovation clusters. This comprises building public and private capacity to invent, improve, and commercialize new products and services. Regional innovation strategies are a keystone of the Secretary of Commerce's commitment to building globally competitive regions.

As part of this strategy, funding is available for capacity-building activities that include Proof of Concept Centers (POCCs) and Commercialization Centers (CCs) (as well as scaling of existing commercialization programs and centers) and for operational support for organizations that provide essential early-stage funding to startups. Under the RIS Program, EDA is soliciting applications for two separate competitions:

- the 2015 i6 Challenge; and
- Seed Fund Support (SFS) Grants.

Applicants may, but are not required to, submit proposals for more than one competition under the RIS Program.

Note that, except for the 2014 RIS Program, previous grants and competitions administered by EDA have been governed by the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended. 42 U.S.C. §3121 *et seq.* [hereinafter PWEDA]. The authorization for the 2015 RIS Program is provided under SWTIA §27, which does not restrict the focus of grantees' projects to economically distressed communities.

   b. FY2015 i6 Challenge Grants

The i6 Challenge is a leading national initiative designed to support the creation of centers for innovation and entrepreneurship that increase the commercialization of innovations, ideas, intellectual property, and research into viable companies.

POCCs and CCs can be physical or virtual, existing or new. Existing POCCs and CCs need not have previously received EDA funds to be considered for this award.

Newly with this FFO, EDA strongly encourages applications for and will provide additional consideration to programs that support the development, creation, or expansion of POCCs and CCs in rural communities or with primary service areas focused on rural communities which accelerate innovation-led economic

development in pursuit of a vibrant innovative economy and economic growth. Such a project should focus on driving economic development in rural communities by building capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship, thereby enabling individuals, firms, and communities to achieve greater prosperity and quality of life.

i. How Are Proof-of-Concept Centers (POCCs) and Commercialization Centers (CCs) Distinguishable?

The following definitions are provided for the purposes of this FFO:

A. Proof of Concept Center

A POCC is a center or program (physical or virtual) which works with very early stage innovations, ideas, intellectual property, and research to provide documented evidence that a product or service can be successful. Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) are a standardized system, categorizing the status of a technology innovation, or its readiness for commercialization[1]. A POCC typically works with innovations from conception to TRLs 3 – 6 to include consideration for viability of the technology (i.e., seeking to answer whether this *can* be done) as well as market potential and financial viability (i.e., seeking to answer whether this *should* be done).

B. Commercialization Center

A CC is a center or program (physical or virtual) which works with later stage innovations, ideas, intellectual property, and research to complete and refine the innovation from TRLs 3 – 6 and fine-tune its market opportunity while supporting the steps toward becoming a viable or expanded business.

ii. Strategies and Goals of POCCs and CCs

POCCs and CCs—including former RIS Program and i6 grantees[2]—function as critical nodes for translating cutting-edge innovation into high-growth entrepreneurship in their regions. They incorporate a range of programs and services in support of innovation-based, high growth entrepreneurship and acceleration of startups through services such as technology advisement and market evaluation, business planning, mentorship, and access to early stage capital. The most successful POCCs and CCs leverage experiences of successful entrepreneurs and business executives, paying close attention to fostering a community with a mindset for and culture of innovation.

EDA expects to fund proposals that create or expand innovative POCCs and CCs that will in turn develop the applicant's capacity to consistently and regularly create high-growth entrepreneurial ventures that contribute to economic growth in the United States. Applicants must demonstrate how they will leverage regional strengths, capabilities, and competitive advantages. All applications should avoid any duplication of existing efforts, or supplanting existing or budgeted efforts. Funding for the i6 Challenge will reward proposals that bring or significantly enhance a culture of innovation and high-growth entrepreneurship to their region.

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[1] The definitions of the TRLs used by EDA for the purposes of this FFO can be found in Appendix C of this FFO. Other TRL definitions include those developed by the Department of Defense, *see* http://www.acq.osd.mil/chieftechnologist/publications/docs/TRA2011.pdf, by the Department of Energy, *see* https://www.directives.doe.gov/directives-documents/400-series/0413.3-EGuide-04a, and by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, *see, e.g.*, http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codeq/trl/trl.pdf, http://esto.nasa.gov/files/trl_definitions.pdf.

[2] *See* http://www.eda.gov/oie/ris/i6/ (linking to information about, including lists of grantees of, the 2014 RIS Program and prior i6 Challenges).

iii. Requirements for i6 Challenge Participants

The i6 Challenge will provide funding to invest in the development, creation, or expansion of POCCs and CCs which accelerate innovation-led economic development in pursuit of a vibrant innovative economy and economic growth. POCCs and CCs can be physical or virtual, existing or new. Existing POCCs and CCs need not have previously received EDA funds to be considered for this award. However, while entities that have *completed* the performance period of a previous i6 Challenge grant **are** eligible, entities that are or plan to be operating *within* the performance period of a previously-awarded i6 Challenge grant at the time of the award of a grant under this FFO **are not** eligible. To be eligible under the i6 Challenge, a proposed project must focus on driving economic development by building capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship, thereby enabling individuals, firms, and communities to achieve greater prosperity and quality of life. Specifically, applications must focus on one or more of the following project outputs:

A. Innovation

Projects that nurture both innovation broadly and market-based applications of the results of that innovation specifically, through:

- The creation of a broad-based, expansive culture of idea generation and the useful application of that innovation, including converting research and development at universities and research centers into commercially viable enterprises;
- The engagement of a diverse set of researchers, innovators, and practitioners supporting commercialization of inventions, ideas or research (where diversity may be defined by population demographics, intellectual approach, innovation, background, or experience); and
- The engagement with industry professionals, investors, and successful entrepreneurs with innovation at its earliest stages to create the best climate, team, and opportunities for an emerging, high-growth startup or acceleration of an existing startup.

B. Entrepreneurship

Projects that develop a large number of high-growth entrepreneurs within a region and that create an ecosystem for those entrepreneurs to experiment with and to commercialize their innovations, as determined by:

- Support of educational programs or work experiences to prepare students[3] and researchers (including those from populations underrepresented in entrepreneurship) for entrepreneurial challenges and work environments; and
- Growth of the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem to ensure a steady stream of high-growth startups to drive job and value creation in the primary service area, community, and region.

C. Regional Connectivity

Projects that connect the community of economic development and commercialization resources through:

- Special events to showcase inventions, ideas, research, technologies, and entrepreneurs to promote the exchange of ideas that leads to the formation of new collaborations and ultimately to the commercialization of innovations;

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[3] A student is defined as an individual enrolled in a class or program. This definition includes, but is not limited to, individuals enrolled at colleges, at universities, and in non-degree granting programs.

- Efforts to forge new and reinforce existing relationships among an inclusive group of regional stakeholders, including stakeholders that may not have existing or strong relationships with the innovation and entrepreneurship community; and
- Engagement with local business associations and government to ensure that high growth entrepreneurs and companies are more fully integrated into the local business community, and that their growing needs are addressed by a robust support network that includes specialized and readily-accessed technical assistance, access to capital, business associations and government officials.

D. Commercialization of Research

Projects that convert ideas, research, or prototypes into viable products and services that can be monetized and brought to market in a financially manageable and rapid manner, as defined by:

- Incorporation of mentors, industry catalysts, and entrepreneurs-in-residence that provide advisory services and that link technology and researchers to external networks;
- Access to seed funding to support the commercialization of promising research through networks created by the organization or by outside funding networks and tools;
- Assistance with market evaluation, business planning, and business opportunity articulation; and
- Creation of processes that integrate scientific review with market potential to greatly accelerate the best ideas from lab to market.

iv. i6 Challenge Examples

The following are examples of regions and economic ecosystems that illustrate how the establishment of an innovation-focused POCC or CC can become the catalyst for economic growth. Please note that these scenarios are informational only and are intended to provide applicants with a clearer picture of how the i6 Challenge is intended to function. THESE EXAMPLES IN NO WAY LIMIT THE RANGE OF POTENTIAL PROPOSED PROJECTS, COMBINATIONS OF ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS, OR ANCHORING ORGANIZATIONS; EDA WELCOMES INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS. Links to descriptions of past recipients can be found at http://www.eda.gov/oie/ris/i6/2014/#i6.

A. Example 1

A region benefits from the presence of large, multi-national corporations and a set of academic institutions. Pressures of globalization, which has introduced more advanced products and a resulting loss of sales, are leading local companies to grow their businesses elsewhere due to a lack of skilled workforce and in order to be closer to innovation hubs. A CC that is established in this region with the support and partnership of the corporations, components of its supply chain, the academic institutions, etc. provides technical and business support for a steady stream of startup companies by building a globally competitive industrial commons in the community. Additionally, the CC works closely with the corporate and manufacturing communities around targeted, job-driven workforce skills to ensure that the regional workforce meets the needs of both the startups and the corporations.

B. Example 2

A region has identified Federal research laboratories and a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem as key local assets. However, most or all entrepreneurial ventures associated with the laboratories have largely clustered around the laboratories or move themselves to traditional innovation hubs. A regional incubator with a strong community of entrepreneurs forms partnerships with these labs to bring entrepreneurs and innovators together to explore novel ways to accelerate the commercial success of their technologies.

C. Example 3

A consortium of community colleges that serve rural areas has an entrepreneurial student body but is underperforming in student- or graduate-led startup companies. The consortium seeks to create a CC to evolve the entrepreneurial and idea-generation culture on campus into a culture that creates sustainable businesses by creating the processes and knowledge bases for developing ideas and innovation into companies and organizations and by connecting investors, successful entrepreneurs, and corporations looking for cutting edge ideas, business models, and technologies to entrepreneurial students.

D. Example 4

A region has seen the decline of the historic industries (such as manufacturing or agriculture) that drove its development and growth. A large research institution that is located in a regional hub but that serves a much broader rural region develops a plan to drive innovation and entrepreneurship in its rural service areas to revitalize those areas through innovation and entrepreneurship. The institution establishes a POCC with physical locations in or virtual connections to rural areas that provides technical and business support for regionally-focused innovative solutions that help solve local problems and that encourage exporting as a strategic growth opportunity while fostering entrepreneurship to create jobs.

c. Seed Fund Support (SFS) Grants

An important element of a regional innovation strategy is the availability of funding for early-stage companies. Often, taking an idea or innovation from conception to market requires hard-to-find capital. Because of this, it is referred to as one of many "valley of death" points in the entrepreneurial process.

EDA is looking to provide funding for technical assistance to support feasibility, planning, formation, or launch of cluster-based seed capital funds to be deployed in support of innovation-based startups with a potential for high growth. While EDA funds cannot capitalize a seed fund (i.e., EDA funds and matching funds cannot be used to invest in startups), the technical assistance funded by EDA can jumpstart the creation or expansion of a seed fund, including but not limited to funding operations to capitalize a fund, to market the fund to potential startups and investors, to educate potential seed fund investors about the importance and advantages of seed funds, and to evaluate potential investments in startup companies. While the Small Business Administration's (SBA's) Small Business Investment Company (SBIC) program funds ultimately pass to startup companies, funding awarded through the SFS Grants will instead seek to create sustainable financing institutions for those startups. Applicants may request funding to support seed capital funding programs and direct supporting programs as outlined below. EDA will collaborate with the SBA during the merit review process to evaluate the extent to which a SFS Grant applicant's proposed project or program complements other federal economic development programs in order to avoid the duplication of existing programs.

i. Requirements for Seed Fund Support (SFS) Grants

Funding may be used for technical assistance, feasibility studies, or marketing related to the operation of equity-based seed capital funds or related programs that meet the following criteria:

A. Early-Stage Capital Support for Innovation-Based, Growth-Oriented Companies

The program must focus on new businesses (generally less than three years old) that are commercializing or using an innovative technology in the development of their product or service. Companies must also have demonstrated potential for high-growth and include performance targets for job creation.

B. Plan for Sustainability

Programs must include sustainability plans based on taking equity stakes in the businesses that the program supports and in which the program invests.

C. Demonstrated Ecosystem and Downstream Support

Ties into the community are a critical element of success for nascent companies. Successful seed-level funding programs provide for further development of companies they invest in by building and maintaining connections to support organizations such as commercialization centers, incubators and other training programs. Additionally important are connections with down-stream funding sources to support the next phase of growth and capital needs of portfolio companies.

ii. Seed Fund Support (SFS) Grants Examples

The following are examples of the types of projects that could be funded through this competition. Please note that these scenarios are informational only and are intended to provide applicants with a clearer picture of how this opportunity is intended to function. These examples in no way limit the range of potential proposed projects, combinations of eligible applicants, or anchoring organizations. Links to descriptions of past recipients can be found at http://www.eda.gov/oie/ris/i6/2014/#scf.

A. Example 1

A consortium of local and regional economic development organizations and municipalities is interested in generating more innovation around a particular challenge in the region. It offers a "call for startups" to develop creative solutions with a demonstrated strong case for commercial potential, and it wants to offer seed-based funding and startup support as part of a competition. The proposal requests funding for personnel to set up, build, market, and advertise the fund.

B. Example 2

A state or municipality has established a seed fund and desires to improve the probability of greater outcomes by providing technical assistance to the companies in which they invest (the seed fund's portfolio companies). It requests a grant to provide specific assistance to their portfolio companies focused on sustainability and growth or technical assistance to establish and provide seed capital funding to startups.

C. Example 3

A regional foundation focused on preventative health care for underserved communities would like to see more startups creating solutions for specific problems in its domain. It requests funding to conduct a study to determine size, scope, and feasibility of the creation of a seed fund to support startups that are innovating in this target space.

D. Example 4

A consortium of local and regional stakeholders has recognized that, while there is a gap in early-stage funding for startup companies in the community, there are a significant number of high-net-worth individuals who typically make up seed fund investors. The consortium requests funding to create an education and outreach program to these high-net-worth individuals to increase their participation in regionally-based seed funds and to catalyze the creation of additional seed funds in the region.

d. Statutory Authorities for the Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) Program

The statutory authority for the RIS Program is SWTIA §27.

2. **AWARD INFORMATION**

   a. **Available Funding Under this Announcement**

The funding periods and funding amounts referenced in this notice are subject to the availability of funds at the time of award, as well as to DOC and EDA priorities at the time of award. Neither DOC nor EDA will be held responsible for application preparation costs. Publication of this announcement does not obligate DOC or EDA to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new awards under each of these three competitions. Subject to the availability of funding, EDA expects to allocate funds as follows:

   i. **FY2015 i6 Challenge Grants**

Up to $8,000,000 for the FY2015 i6 Challenge, from which EDA expects to award approximately 16 or more grants each valued at a maximum of $500,000. Of the $8,000,000 in total i6 Challenge funding, EDA expects to award up to approximately $2,500,000 to applications that offer services primarily to rural communities.

   A. *Rural Communities*

For the purposes of this FFO, a "rural community" or "rural area" is any area <u>OTHER THAN</u> (i) a city or town that has a population greater than 50,000 inhabitants; and (ii) the urbanized area contiguous with and adjacent to such a city or town. The applicant organization need not necessarily be *located* in a rural community or rural areas, but, to qualify as offering services *primarily* to rural communities, a program or project must demonstrate that substantial benefits will accrue to individuals and firms that reside in rural communities.

   ii. **Seed Fund Support (SFS) Grants**

Up to $2,000,000 for SFS Grants, from which EDA expects to award approximately 8 or more grants each valued at a maximum of $250,000.

   b. **Type of Funding Instrument Used; Project Periods**

Subject to the availability of funds, EDA may award grants or cooperative agreements to eligible applicants to help support activities. If the funding instrument to be used is a cooperative agreement, the nature of EDA's "substantial involvement" will generally be collaboration between EDA and the recipient on the scope of work. Additional forms of substantial involvement that may arise are described in Chapter 5.C of the DOC Grants and Cooperative Agreements Manual, which is available at http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/FINAL Master DOC Grants Manual 2013 (03.01.13)_b.pdf.

Project periods are dependent on the type of project, scope of work, and the EDA program under which the grant for the project is awarded. *See* Section 6(a) of this FFO for award notification information.

- For the i6 Challenge, the anticipated award will have an initial project period of three years with an estimated start date on or about 120 days after the closing date of this FFO.
- For the SFS Grants competition, the anticipated award will have an initial project period of two years with an estimated start date on or about 120 days after the closing date of this FFO.

EDA expects all projects to proceed efficiently and expeditiously, and EDA expects applicants to clearly document a reasonable and appropriate timeline for the start and completion of the proposed scope of work.

3. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

a. Eligible Applicants

EDA is **not** authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals, and such requests will not be considered for funding.

Pursuant to SWTIA §27, eligible applicants for and eligible recipients of EDA investment assistance under this FFO include:

- A State;
- An Indian tribe;
- A city or other political subdivision of a State;
- An entity that—
  - is a nonprofit organization, an institution of higher education, a public-private partnership, a science or research park, a Federal laboratory, or an economic development organization or similar entity; and
  - has an application that is supported by a State or a political subdivision of a State; or
- A consortium of any of the immediately aforementioned entities.

Please note that, in evaluating applications, EDA will provide preference to organizations and consortia that demonstrate regional collaboration and the ability to leverage and complement existing state, local, and nonprofit organization programs and initiatives that support innovation- and entrepreneurship-based economic development.

b. Cost-Sharing or Matching

Under this FFO, applicants must demonstrate AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION a matching share from non-Federal[4] sources. **The applicant must show that the matching share will: (i) be COMMITTED to the project for the project period, (ii) be AVAILABLE as needed, and (iii) NOT BE CONDITIONED OR ENCUMBERED in any way that may preclude its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance.** EDA may give preference to applications with higher matching shares where there are clear and reasonable justifications as to how the higher matching share will be used to further leverage Federal funds and to help ensure additional project impact. Under this FFO, a separate match is required for each project. For all competitions, **the amount of an EDA grant may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of each project**.

In the application review process, EDA will consider the nature of the contribution (cash or in-kind) and the amount of the matching share funds. In-kind contributions may provide the required non-Federal share of the total project cost and can consist of contributions directly related to the proposed project, such as space, equipment, or services. EDA will fairly evaluate all in-kind contributions, which must be eligible project costs and meet applicable Federal cost principles and uniform administrative requirements.[5]

Applicants are STRONGLY encouraged to work with the appropriate EDA representative listed in Section 8 of this FFO to determine how in-kind contributions may be utilized to satisfy the matching share requirement based upon the project concept and application. Please note that because EDA funds cannot be used as venture capital or as an equity investment, the matching share may not include venture capital or equity.

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[4] Funds from other Federal financial assistance awards are considered matching share funds only if authorized by statute, which may be determined by EDA's reasonable interpretation of the statute.

[5] See 2 CFR § 200.306.

4. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

a. How to Obtain an Application Package

An applicant may obtain the appropriate application package electronically at http://www.grants.gov/ (Grants.gov). Applicants may search for this funding opportunity on Grants.gov using Funding Opportunity Number "EDA-HDQ-OIE-2015-2004566." All components of the appropriate application package may be accessed and downloaded (in a screen-fillable format) at www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html. The preferred electronic file format for attachments is Adobe portable document format (PDF); however, EDA will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or Microsoft Excel. Alternatively, an applicant eligible for assistance under this announcement may request a paper application package by contacting EDA's Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE) via phone at (202) 482-8001 or via mail addressed to 1401 Constitution Ave NW Rm 78018, Washington, DC, 20230. APPLICANTS ARE ADVISED THAT THEY MUST COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION PROCESS PRIOR TO SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION THROUGH GRANTS.GOV; HOWEVER, PLEASE NOTE THAT REGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED FOR AN APPLICANT TO ACCESS, VIEW, OR DOWNLOAD THE APPLICATION PACKAGE. Even though an applicant may be able to view and download an application, IF THE APPLICANT HAS NOT CORRECTLY COMPLETED THE GRANTS.GOV REGISTRATION PROCESS, THE APPLICANT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SUBMIT THE APPLICATION FOR EDA'S REVIEW.

b. Content and Form of Application Submission

i. What Is Required for a Complete Application?

In order to be considered for funding, applicants MUST SUBMIT A COMPLETE APPLICATION PACKAGE for each competition to which they are applying that INCLUDES ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS OUTLINED BELOW by the applicable deadline. All documentation and data submitted as part of the application package should be current and applicable.

All applications MUST include the following documents:

1. One **Form SF-424** (Application for Federal Assistance) from each applicant or co-applicant;
2. One **Form SF-424A** (Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs) per application is required (applicants should ensure that the SF-424A reflects a distinct budget for each competition for which the applicant is applying);
3. One **Form SF-424B** (Assurances-Non-Construction Programs) from each applicant or co-applicant;
4. One **Form CD-511** (Certification Regarding Lobbying) from each applicant or co-applicant;
5. One **Form SF-LLL** (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) from each applicant or co-applicant;
6. A **Project Narrative** of no more than 10 single-sided pages using one of Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman of size no less than 11 points (see Section 4(b)(iv) of this FFO for additional information);
7. A **Budget Narrative** of no more than 2 single-sided pages using one of Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman of size no less than 11 points (see Section 4(b)(v) of this FFO for additional information; **note that supporting documentation that indicates that matching funds are unencumbered, unrestricted, and committed, including but not limited to letters from the organizations providing the funds,** DOES NOT **count toward this page limit**);
8. **Comments from the State Clearinghouse** to comply with Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," if applicable (If the comment period has not expired or comments were not received, a copy of the applicant's request for comments is sufficient; however, in that instance, the final determination will be required prior to award. Detailed

information on the State Clearinghouse process can be accessed at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc).

9. If the applicant or co-applicant is a NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, an INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, a PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP, a SCIENCE OR RESEARCH PARK, a FEDERAL LABORATORY, or an ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION OR SIMILAR ENTITY, in addition to the documents required above, each applicant or co-applicant must provide a copy of:

   a. The **certificate of good standing** less than 12 months old from the State in which the entity or entities are incorporated;
   b. The current **Articles of Incorporation** or other formation documents of the entity or entities;
   c. The **By-Laws** of the entity or entities; AND
   d. One or more **resolutions (or letters)** that demonstrate that the applicant's or co-applicants' application is supported by a State or a political subdivision of a State (e.g. a county, a municipality) that is relevant to the proposed projects or programs.

10. A copy of each applicant's or co-applicant's **current, approved Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Agreement**. *See* Section 4(b)(ii).

11. A **valid unique entity identifier from the System for Award Management (SAM)** for each applicant or co-applicant. *See* Section 4(b)(iii).

All application forms submitted through Grants.gov MUST BE SIGNED ELECTRONICALLY BY AN AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE (AOR); please see Section 9(b) of this FFO for information on AOR requirements.[6] Please refer to important information on submitting your application provided in Section 4(d) of this FFO.

ii.   Copy of Current, Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

If facilities and administrative costs (sometimes referred to as indirect costs) are included in the budget, the applicant must include a copy of its current Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate Agreement or documentation establishing that it has a pending application. An applicant that does not have a current Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate Agreement negotiated and approved by the Department of Commerce (or by the applicable cognizant Federal agency) may propose facilities and administrative costs in its budget. However, the applicant must prepare and submit a facilities and administrative cost allocation plan and rate proposal or a negotiated indirect cost rate as required by 2 CFR part 200 "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards." The allocation plan and the rate proposal must be submitted to EDA's Office of Regional Affairs (or applicable cognizant Federal agency) within ninety days from the award start date.

The maximum dollar amount of allocable facilities and administrative costs for which EDA will reimburse a recipient shall be the lesser of the: (i) line-item amount for the Federal share of facilities and administrative costs contained in the EDA approved budget for the award, or (ii) Federal share of the total allocable facilities and administrative costs of the award based on the cost rate approved by EDA (or applicable cognizant Federal agency), provided that the cost rate is current at the time the costs were incurred and provided that the rate is approved on or before the award end date. The applicant should include a statement in its budget narrative if the applicant does not have, or has not applied for, a Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate Agreement.

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[6] The AOR must be a person who has the authority to execute documents on behalf of the legal entity making application. See §9(b) of this FFO.

In addition, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those non-Federal entities described in Paragraph D.1.b of Appendix VII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (specifically, a governmental department or agency that receives more than $35 million in direct Federal funding), may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs.

iii. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR §25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR §25.110(d)) are required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. EDA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time EDA is ready to make a Federal award, EDA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 requires that, to the extent applicable, any proposal awarded in response to this announcement will be required to use the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), now a part of the System for Award Management (SAM) located at http://www.sam.gov, and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS), now referred to as a unique entity identifier, and will be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. parts 25 and 170 (2010). The guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. part 25 may be located at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part25.pdf and the guidance set out at 2 C.F.R. part 170 may be located at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ae3503261286d1cec7a823166eb5bfbf&mc=true&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl

iv. Project Narrative Requirements

As outlined in Section 4(b)(i) of this FFO, all applicants must provide a project narrative in order to be considered for funding. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a clear and concise narrative that includes a compelling justification for the project and articulates a clearly defined regional economic gap, how the proposed project will uniquely meet this need, and the expected outcome(s) that will result from the proposed project. This should be addressed in a concise manner; lengthy applications will not receive greater consideration. Note that the project narrative and budget narrative are separate documents with different technical requirements and should be submitted separately. *See* Section 4(b)(i) of this FFO. A competitive application will address the following elements in the project narrative:

A. *Description of Project Region, Location, and Impact*

Applicants must clearly describe the region where the project will be located, including the specific geographic location of the project within the region, as well as background on the assets of the area, which may include clusters, workforce, and physical, educational, and financial infrastructure. If the impact is expected to expand beyond the noted region, that should be detailed as well.

1. Primary Service Areas

Applicants must explicitly identify their proposed programs' or projects' primary service areas by county or county equivalent (collectively, "counties") and must show a concrete plan to reach innovators and entrepreneurs in those counties. The programs or projects must primarily benefit innovators and

entrepreneurs in those counties. The counties that make up an application's proposed programs' or projects' primary service areas should be identified **both** by name and by their respective 5-digit FIPS codes[7] (e.g., the FIPS code of Marion County, AL, is 01093; of Park County, MT, is 30067; and of Alexandria, VA—an independent city and thus a county equivalent—is 51510).

B. Clear Description of Proposed Project

Applicants must clearly document the concrete activities that will be undertaken, and the specific deliverables that will be produced as a result of this investment. The description of the proposed project must include (i) a clear statement of the overall purpose of the project; (ii) the role of each applicant, co-applicant, and key personnel (including a description of their qualifications and/or an approximately one or two page résumé for each key person); and (iii) key milestones along with an estimated project start date (or range), estimated completion dates for key milestones, and an estimated project completion date. For clarity and conciseness, it is suggested that applications include a detailed list- or bullet-style scope of work as part of the description of the proposed project.

C. Documentation of Anticipated Project Impacts

Applicants must provide a clear and compelling justification of the long-term potential economic impact of the proposed project by including metrics such as anticipated job creation or retention, anticipated private investment leveraged, anticipated number of businesses or collaborations supported, and other appropriate measures. All impact estimates, including but not limited to job and private investment leverage estimates, should reflect the anticipated impact at the end of the grant performance period, two years after the end of the grant performance period, and five years after the end of the grant performance period. In all cases, applicants must **document the benefit**, **provide third-party data or information** to support these claims, and **include practical and clear tracking and reporting mechanisms** for metrics that will measure the economic impact during and after the project.

v. Budget Justification and Supporting Documentation Requirements

Applicants must provide a clear budget narrative that identifies and justifies how funds in each line item of the budget will be utilized to support the proposed project. The budget narrative should include itemized valuations of any in-kind matching funds (e.g. a staffing plan for personnel). The non-Federal share, whether in cash or in-kind, is expected to be paid out at the same general rate as the Federal share; however, if the applicant's budget narrative proposes otherwise, applicants must also include information that clearly indicates what project elements the matching share funds will support. Finally, **the applicant must submit supporting documentation to indicate these funds are UNENCUMBERED, UNRESTRICTED, and COMMITTED to support the proposed project**. For page limits and other technical requirements, *see* Section 4(b)(i) of this FFO.

c. Deadlines for Submission

The closing date for receipt of applications for funding under this FFO is **MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2015**.

Applications submitted electronically via www.grants.gov (Grants.gov) must be received by **11:59 P.M. EASTERN TIME** on **MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2015**. **THE DATE AND TIME THAT AN APPLICATION WILL BE DEEMED TO BE ELECTRONICALLY RECEIVED WILL BE DETERMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED AT GRANTS.GOV FOR THIS FFO.** *See* Sections 4(d),9 of this FFO for

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[7] *See, e.g.,* http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/codes/cou.html (providing access to FIPS codes for counties and county equivalents).

information regarding electronic submissions. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE CLOSING DATE AND TIME WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING.

In addition, please note the following:

- EDA WILL NOT ACCEPT any unsolicited changes, additions, revisions, or deletions to applications after the submission deadline.
- Throughout the review and selection process, EDA reserves the right to seek clarification in writing from applicants whose applications are being reviewed and considered.
- Applicants may be asked to clarify objectives and work plans and modify budgets or other specifics necessary to comply with Federal requirements and provide supplemental information required by the agency before award.
- See Section 5 of this FFO for application review and selection information.

APPLICANTS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO START EARLY AND NOT TO WAIT UNTIL THE APPROACHING APPLICATION DEADLINE BEFORE LOGGING ON AND REVIEWING THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION THROUGH GRANTS.GOV. Applicants should SAVE AND PRINT WRITTEN PROOF of an electronic submission made at Grants.gov. If problems occur while using Grants.gov, the applicant is advised to (i) print any error message received; and (ii) call Grants.gov at (800) 518-4726 for immediate assistance. EDA, in its sole discretion, may allow submission via an alternate method (e.g, email) due to a "systems issue" at Grants.gov **only insofar as any such systems issue is beyond the control of the applicant; however, any submission via this alternate method must be received before the deadline**. LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. *See* Sections 4(d), 9 of this FFO for more information on electronic submissions.

d. Means of Submission

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED THROUGH GRANTS.GOV. EDA will not accept paper, facsimile or email transmissions of applications for this program. Applications must be successfully validated and time-stamped by Grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the date of the deadline listed in Section 4(c) of this FFO. **An application that is not validated and time-stamped by Grants.gov by the deadline WILL NOT BE REVIEWED. Note that the Grants.gov registration is a multi-stage process that involves a number of steps, including validation, verification, and registration through other websites such as sam.gov.** *See* Sections 7(c), 9(a) of this FFO. Please visit http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html for resources and guides on the Grants.gov registration process.

Once an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process through Grants.gov during which the application may be accepted or rejected by the system. **Please be advised that the validation process may take 24 to 48 hours to complete. Applications that contain errors will be rejected by Grants.gov, and will not be forwarded to EDA for review. The applicant must correct the error before Grants.gov will accept and validate the application. EDA will not accept late applications that were rejected by Grants.gov due to applicant errors. Accordingly, EDA** STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT APPLICANTS SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATIONS AT LEAST FIVE DAYS BEFORE THE DEADLINE **to allow the application to be accepted and validated in the system and to allow time for any errors to be corrected. EDA will consider the time-stamp on the validation from Grants.gov as the official submission time.**

Please see Section 9 of this FFO for more detailed instructions and information on the requirements for submitting applications electronically via Grants.gov.

e. Optional Pre-Submission Technical Review

Applicants may submit a copy of their application and receive feedback on their application before the deadline.[8] Applicants who submit complete applications for pre-submission technical review will be informed whether their application is technically complete (i.e. if it includes all the documents required by Section 4(b)(i) of this FFO) and whether the applicant is an eligible entity—i.e., whether or not EDA would forward the application in its current state to a Merit Review Panel. No other review will be conducted and no additional feedback will be provided (e.g. no feedback on the merits of the application will be provided). Based on this feedback, the applicant may revise or supplement the application or submit a substantially revised application by the deadline.

Pre-submission technical review is designed ONLY to provide feedback on the technical completeness of an application and the applicant's eligibility for funding, and is NOT designed to provide any review or feedback of an application's merits or to provide assistance in the development of an application. EDA staff will attempt to provide pre-submission technical review within two weeks of receipt of a request therefor; however, such review is not guaranteed, may not be comprehensive, and does not guarantee or suggest that the final submitted application will be forwarded to a Merit Review Panel or selected for funding.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek this technical feedback from EDA no later than August 31, 2015, in order to allow adequate time to address any technical issues before final submission. The review and feedback described in this subsection are optional. Applicants need not seek preliminary feedback on their application in order to submit an application for consideration. Please see Section 8 of this FFO for contact information for EDA representatives.

5. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Throughout the review and selection process, EDA reserves the right to seek clarification in writing from applicants whose applications are being reviewed and considered. EDA may ask applicants to clarify application materials, objectives, and work plans, or modify budgets or other specifics necessary to comply with Federal requirements.

a. Evaluation Criteria

For each program, the following factors will be considered by members of the Merit Review Panels to judge applications. Evaluation criteria for each program will be scored independently. Applicants that apply for all sources of funds may not necessarily receive favorable consideration for each competition. NOTE: Each factor will be weighted as indicated for a total possible score of 100 points under each competition.

i. FY2015 i6 Challenge Grants

All applicants are expected to provide a clear and detailed explanation as to how the proposed project will meet the i6 Challenge evaluation criteria. EDA will consider applications that include such an explanation with supporting data (including performance measures and deliverables, as applicable) more competitive than those that do not include supporting data.

For the FY 2015 i6 Challenge, the following five factors will be considered. Each factor will be weighted as indicated for a total possible score of 100 points.

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[8] Ineligible applicants will be informed that they are ineligible for EDA funding. Please see §3(a) of this FFO for eligibility requirements.

FY2015 i6 Challenge Scoring

- Approach 20%
- Planning & Feasibility 30%
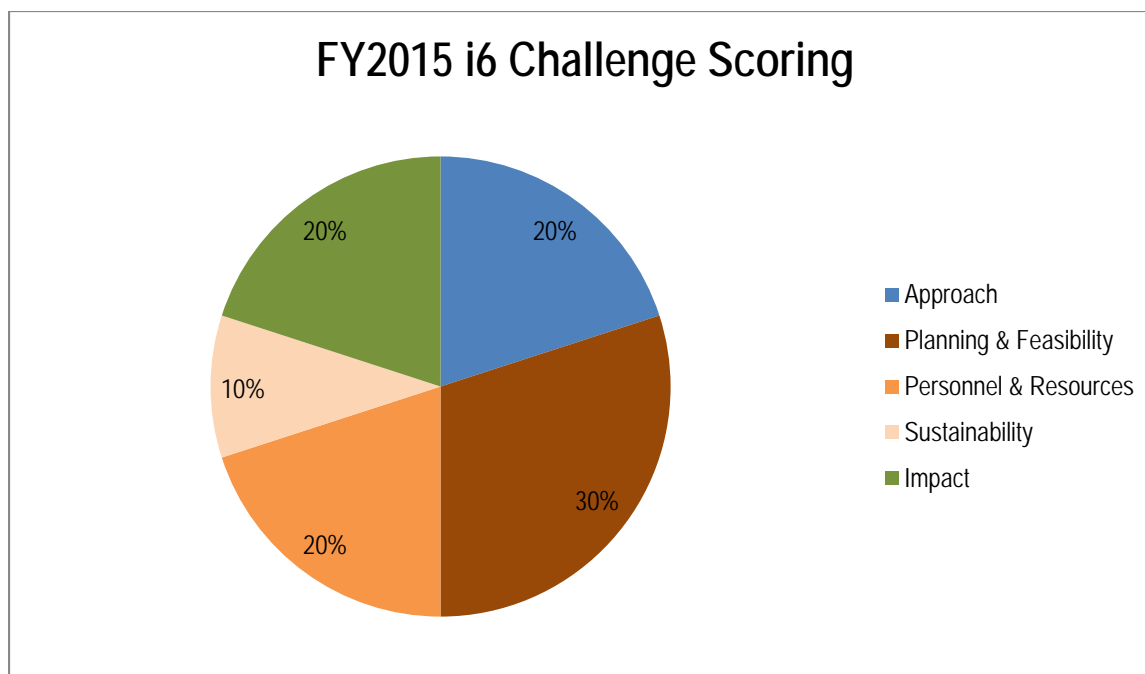- Personnel & Resources 20%
- Sustainability 10%
- Impact 20%

Figure 5-1: FY2015 i6 Challenge Scoring

A. Approach (20 Points)

Applications will be evaluated based on their plan to effectively use the proposed project as described in Section 1(b) of this FFO to address their regional innovation and entrepreneurial needs. Moreover, the application should present a clear, specific, and realistic approach to accelerating the movement of innovative ideas to the marketplace, such as innovation in the areas of energy, life sciences, information technology, health care, education, innovative manufacturing, telecommunications or social innovation. This will be evaluated to the extent an application demonstrates:

- A clear understanding of a real, persistent problem that faces or an unaddressed opportunity that positively affects the region's entrepreneurs and innovators;
- The timeliness or urgency or the problem or opportunity;
- The ability of the proposed projects or programs to solve the problem or to capitalize on the opportunity;
- The creativity or transformational potential of the projects or programs, the role and benefit of the proposed projects or programs with respect to the problem or opportunity, and the best practices on which the proposed projects or programs are based;
- The extent of the projects' or programs' focus on serving rural communities (*see* Section 2(a)(i)(A) of this FFO);
- A clear linkage between the proposed projects' or programs' activities that create or increase capacity for innovation, entrepreneurship, and the commercialization of ideas and documented, task-oriented milestones; and
- An understanding of the region's populations that are underrepresented in innovation and entrepreneurship and the ability of the programs or projects to reach and include those underrepresented populations.

B. Planning & Feasibility (30 Points)

Applications must show that establishing or enhancing the capabilities of a POCC or CC and its accompanying features is a likely outcome from i6 Challenge funding. This will be evaluated to the extent an application demonstrates:

- Strategies, tactics, and tasks that leverage regional strengths, mitigate regional weaknesses (including but not limited to a documented negative impact due to trade), capitalize on strategic opportunities and resources, and recognize and address short- and long-term challenges;
- The ability to leverage and complement existing state, local, and nonprofit organization programs and initiatives that create or increase capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship (e.g., Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), business incubators, university programs);
- The extent to which the applicant collaborates with local workforce investment area boards;
- Strategies to provide assistance (technical, business, etc.) to entrepreneurs and innovators at all relevant phases in their development (e.g., via assistance with market assessments, with evaluations of societal and organizational potential, with legal issues (including patent prosecution, technology licensing, legal entity formation, etc.), with financing, or with marketing);
- A reasoned intellectual property strategy that leverages the creative and technological acumen of the projects' or programs' clients (i.e., employees, organizations, existing companies, and new ventures);
- A complete proposed schedule and budget, including clearly defined milestones that are clearly linked to the defined targets and metrics, *see* Section 5(a)(i)(E) of this FFO;
- The likelihood that milestones will be met;
- The extent to which challenges and risks are identified and mitigation strategies are proposed;
- The strength of the proposed organization and management plan to achieve the projects' or programs' goals; and
- Strategies, tactics, and tasks to reach out to and include underrepresented populations in innovation and entrepreneurship (including but not limited to innovators or entrepreneurs located or operating primarily in rural communities and nontraditional innovators and entrepreneurs).

C. Personnel & Resources (20 Points)

Applications will be evaluated in terms of the qualifications of the team, participating organizations, key personnel, and other proposed resources, including:

- Qualified personnel that, as a group, demonstrate project and program management expertise and success in protecting, licensing, and commercializing intellectual property;
- The education, experience, and professional accomplishments of key personnel;
- The adequacy of the applicant's team to carry out the proposed projects or programs and to achieve success (including but not limited to the team's ability to execute projects or programs in rural communities or in communities with populations historically underrepresented in innovation or entrepreneurship);
- The previous performance of the organizations making up the team, as applicable;
- The extent of regional partners' (including but not limited to other Federal agencies') participation in and commitment to the projects or programs, excluding financial or in-kind commitments used as matching funds;
- The extent to which partners (including but not limited to other Federal agencies) contribute or otherwise commit resources (financial or in-kind);

- The appropriateness, quality, and availability of any facilities, materials and resources to be used in implementing the proposed plan; and
- Established or identified access to capital (i.e., financing), in various forms, for early-stage, potentially high-growth companies or otherwise promising entrepreneurs.

D. Sustainability (10 Points)

Applications will be evaluated on the applicant organization's plan for sustaining success of the POCC or CC beyond the period of Federal funding, including:

- Adequate financial resources to ensure a high probability of success of the proposed projects or programs;
- A strong potential to become self-sustaining without significant future Federal funding; and
- Long-term, broad, and deep commitments and documented support from private and public sector leaders and from stakeholders throughout the region.

E. Impact (20 Points)

Applications must demonstrate the economic development impact (including but not limited to the job creation and private investment impacts) of the proposed POCC or CC and must include both (i) clear and reasonable outputs and short- and long-term outcomes and (ii) practical and clear tracking and reporting mechanisms for these expected outputs and outcomes of the proposed project or program. They will be evaluated to the extent that the application identifies and explains:

- Degree of the target impacts' relevance to the proposed scope of work and the requirements as described in Section 1(b) of the FFO (including but not limited to with respect to the projects' or programs' expected impacts on building capacity for innovation- and entrepreneurship-based economic development in rural communities);
- Reasonableness of target impacts (i.e., goals) in light of the application as a whole (including but not limited to the proposed approach, plan, personnel, resources, etc.);
- The strength of the stated methodology to capture, report, and track progress against identified metrics and milestones;
- A reasonable use of available data to drive the development of baselines and the projections of overall impacts;
- A reasonable use of available data to measure the projects' and programs' impacts in the wider community, region, etc.;
- Quantifiable outputs and outcomes that benefit the regional economy (e.g., measurable metrics via which the extent to which infrastructure for innovation, commercialization, and enterprise formation will be enhanced); and
- The ability of the proposed metrics to measure the extent to which underrepresented populations are engaged by, included in, and served by the programs or projects.

Applicants should consider the output and outcome measures set forth in Section 5(b) of this FFO.

ii. Seed Fund Support (SFS) Grants

All applicants are expected to provide a clear and detailed explanation as to how the proposed project will meet the evaluation criteria below. EDA will consider applications that include such an explanation with supporting data (including performance measures and deliverables, as applicable) more competitive than those that do not include supporting data.

For SFS Grants, applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the proposed program and requested support meet the following criteria. Each factor will be weighted as indicated for a total possible score of 100 points.
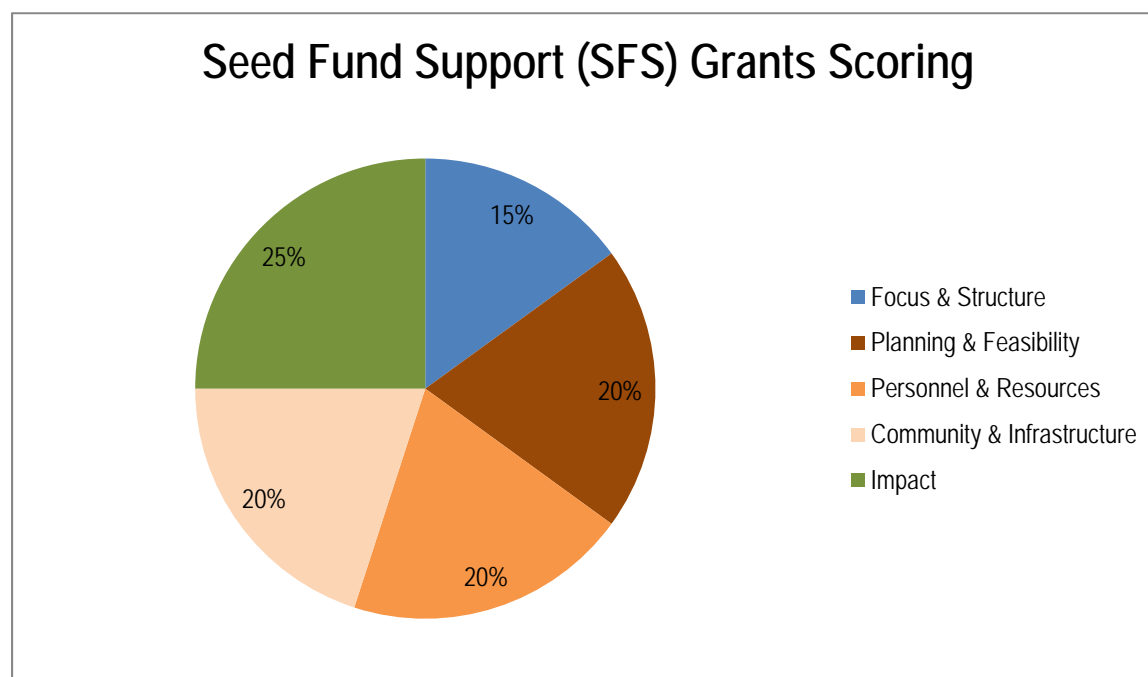
Seed Fund Support (SFS) Grants Scoring

- 15% — Focus & Structure
- 20% — Planning & Feasibility
- 20% — Personnel & Resources
- 20% — Community & Infrastructure
- 25% — Impact

Figure 5-2: Seed Fund Support (SFS) Grants Scoring

A. Focus & Structure (15 Points)

Applications will be evaluated on:

- The strength of the Seed Capital Fund's processes and criteria for company selection;
- The extent to which the Seed Capital Fund provides ongoing evaluation of and technical and business assistance to selected companies; and
- The extent to which the programs or projects reach out to and engage an inclusive array of innovators and entrepreneurs, including but not limited to nontraditional entrepreneurs and underrepresented populations in innovation and entrepreneurship.

B. Planning & Feasibility (20 Points)

Applications should demonstrate:

- Potential investments toward or pathways to full capitalization of the Seed Capital Fund;
- Outreach to and development, education, and connection of new or expanded sources of seed capital investments (e.g., individuals, investment associations, crowdfunding participants);
- Demonstrated pipeline of potential early-stage investment targets or a comprehensive plan to develop such a pipeline;
- A comprehensive sustainability plan to finance operational costs of the Seed Capital Fund;
- A comprehensive sustainability plan to serve as a long-term source of investments in early-stage companies in the community, region, or ecosystem; and
- Strategies, tactics, and tasks to reach out to and include underrepresented populations in innovation and entrepreneurship.

C. Personnel & Resources (20 Points)

Strong applications will demonstrate:

- Qualified personnel that, as a group, demonstrate success in creating access to or managing capital for startups or other early-stage ventures;
- The education, experience, and professional accomplishments of key personnel;
- The adequacy of the applicant's team to carry out the proposed projects or programs and to achieve success;
- The previous performance of the organizations making up the team, as applicable;
- The extent of regional partners' (including but not limited to other Federal agencies') participation in and commitment to the Seed Capital Fund, excluding financial or in-kind commitments used as matching funds;
- The extent to which partners (including but not limited to other Federal agencies) contribute or otherwise commit resources (financial or in-kind); and
- The appropriateness, quality, and availability of any facilities, materials, and resources to be used in implementing the proposed plan.

D. Community & Infrastructure (20 Points)

Strong applications will include:

- Letters of intent to invest;
- Letters of support from downstream investment sources, commercialization centers, incubators, accelerators, and the general business community;
- A clear understanding of a real, persistent problem (including but not limited to a documented negative impact due to trade) that faces or an unaddressed opportunity that positively affects the region's entrepreneurs and innovators; and
- Demonstrated leverage of and cooperation with existing state, local, and nonprofit organization programs and initiatives that create or increase regional capacity innovation and entrepreneurship (e.g., SBDCs, business incubators, university programs) and other regional resources (e.g. local workforce investment area boards).

E. Impact (25 Points)

Applications must demonstrate the economic development impact (including but not limited to the job creation and private investment impacts) of the proposed POCC or CC and must include both (i) clear and reasonable outputs and short- and long-term outcomes and (ii) practical and clear tracking and reporting mechanisms for these expected outputs and outcomes of the proposed project or program. They will be evaluated to the extent that the application identifies and explains:

- Degree of the target impacts' relevance to the proposed scope of work and the requirements as described in Section 1(d) of the FFO;
- Reasonableness of target impacts (i.e., goals) in light of the application as a whole (including but not limited to the proposed approach, plan, personnel, resources, etc.);
- The strength of the stated methodology to capture, report, and track progress against identified metrics and milestones;

- A reasonable use of available data to drive the development of baselines and the projections of overall impacts;
- A reasonable use of available data to measure the projects' and programs' impacts in the wider community, region, etc.;
- Demonstrated potential for job creation;
- Demonstrated quantifiable benefits to the regional economy (excluding job creation);
- Practical and clear measurement and reporting mechanisms of outputs and outcomes linked to the objectives of this FFO; and
- The ability of the proposed metrics to measure the extent to which underrepresented populations are engaged by, included in, and served by the programs or projects.

Applicants should consider the output and outcome measures set forth in Section 5(b) of this FFO.

b. Output and Outcome Measures

Applicants are encouraged to consider a broad range of relevant output and outcome measures in developing their proposed scope of work. Examples of such output and outcome measures include the following:

i. Exemplary Output Measures:

- Number of events (such as networking or mentoring sessions) held;
- Number of boot camps held;
- Number of new facilities established;
- Number of technologies licensed or commercialized;
- Number of patents which gained government approval;
- Number of Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) proposals supported;
- Number of participants gaining new certifications or degrees;
- Number of participants with new partnerships; or
- Number of loans obtained
- Number of investors in each seed fund investment round

ii. Exemplary Outcome Measures:

- Number of new Angel investments or Venture Capital investments in supported firms;
- Number of new firms developed;
- Number of new products launched by participants;
- Percent of participants reporting new skills acquired from events or boot camps;
- Percent of participants reporting using new skills to support continued activities; or
- Percent of participants reporting new or increased exports
- Number of jobs supported by seed fund investments
- Percent investment return on sale, exit, initial public offering

c. Review and Selection Process

As set forth below, EDA staff will review all applications received to ensure that they are complete and eligible to receive funding.

i.   Review for Eligibility and Completeness (Technical Review)

EDA staff will conduct an eligibility and technical completeness review (the "Technical Review") of all applications received by the application deadline. Applications received from ineligible entities will not be considered for funding. APPLICATIONS THAT DO NOT CONTAIN ALL FORMS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION LISTED IN SECTION 4(B)(I) OF THIS FFO MAY BE DEEMED NON-RESPONSIVE AND EXCLUDED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION. EDA EXPECTS ALL APPLICANTS TO COMPLETE AND INCLUDE ALL REQUIRED FORMS AND DOCUMENTATION. However, EDA, in its sole discretion, may determine that an omission is a non-substantive technical deficiency if it can easily and quickly be rectified or cured, and therefore, may continue its consideration of the application despite the deficiency. Technical Review will be conducted separately for each competition; an applicant that does not meet the Technical Review requirements for one competition will not be precluded from any other competitions for which it applied, provided the requirements for those competitions are met.

ii.   Merit Review Panels

Merit Review Panels, comprised of at least three Federal employees, will evaluate the applications against the evaluation criteria for the relevant competition enumerated in Section 5(a) of this FFO and award up to 100 points to each application for each competition. Application scores will be determined by each panelist on an individual basis, and the average of the individual ratings will produce a panel score. EDA, in its sole discretion, may use a statistical technique to normalize scores across panelists and panels. For each competition, the Merit Review Panels will prepare a priority funding order for the applications—based on its consideration of the evaluation criteria—and recommend to the EDA Grants Officer, in such priority order, those applications that merit consideration for EDA funding.

iii.   Grants Officer Decision

The Merit Review Panels' recommendations will be forwarded to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Affairs (DAS/RA), who is the Grants Officer under this announcement. The DAS/RA has been delegated the authority to make the final decision on whether to fund an application and may select a project for funding that differs from the Merit Review Panels' priority recommendations based on any of the following Selection Factors or use these Selection Factors to break a tie for applications that are otherwise considered equal in merit:

1. The extent to which the application meets the overall objectives of SWTIA §27;
2. The extent to which the project will positively impact rural communities;
3. The ability of a project to start quickly;
4. The applicant's performance under previous Federal financial assistance awards, including whether the grantee submitted required performance reports and data;
5. For previous grantees, the extent to which the application builds upon and creates synergies with previously funded work;
6. For applicants to multiple competitions under this FFO, the extent to which the proposal leverages dollars across the multiple programs to make their overall approach stronger.
7. The extent to which the project may assist communities negatively impacted by trade;
8. The extent to which the applicant intends to collaborate with local workforce investment area boards;
9. The availability of program funding; and
10. The extent to which the project supports EDA's goals of geographic balance in distribution of program funds, project types, organizational type (including smaller and rural organizations) and the overall portfolio.

The final decision of the DAS/RA must be consistent with EDA's and DOC's published policies. Should the DAS/RA make a selection that differs from the Merit Review Panels' ranked applications, the DAS/RA will document the rationale for the decision in writing.

6. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

a. Award Notification

Under this FFO, EDA expects to notify applicants of its decision in writing within 120 days of the application deadline. If an application is selected for funding, the EDA Grants Officer will issue the signed grant award (Form CD-450), which is the authorizing financial assistance award document and includes the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. A sample Form CD-450 is available at http://ocio.os.doc.gov/s/groups/public/@doc/@os/@ocio/@oitpp/documents/content/dev01_002513.pdf and the DOC Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (December 2014) are available at http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/DOC_Standard_Terms_12_26_2014.pdf.

By signing Form CD-450, the recipient agrees to comply with all award provisions. EDA will provide Form CD-450 via email through Grants Online, an electronic grants management system. The email will provide the authorized representative with instructions on how to create an account with Grants Online in order to view and sign the award. The recipient must sign and return the Form CD-450 without modification within 30 days of the date of EDA's signature on the form. Failure to sign and return the CD-450 during this timeframe may be considered grounds for appropriate enforcement action pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.338 ("Remedies for noncompliance"), including award termination.

If an applicant is awarded funding, neither DOC nor EDA is under any obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award or to make any future award(s). Amendment or renewal of an award to increase funding or to extend the period of performance is at the discretion of DOC and EDA.

EDA will provide written notice to all applicants informing them whether their application was selected for funding. EDA will retain unsuccessful applications in accordance with EDA's record retention schedule.

b. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all DOC awards apply to this competition. These requirements may be found in the "Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions" (ST&Cs) and is summarized in the "Department of Commerce Pre-Award notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements," published in the Federal Register on December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78309). The Pre-Award notice may be accessed at the Government Printing Office (GPO) website at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-30/pdf/2014-30297.pdf. The ST&Cs may be accessed at the following website: http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/DOC_Standard_Terms_12_26_2014.pdf.

c. Reporting Requirements

i. Financial, Performance, and Impact Reports

All recipients are required to submit financial, performance, and impact reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant award, generally no less than semi-annually. All project progress and financial reports must be submitted to the applicable EDA program officer in electronic format. Recipients will be required to provide updates on their progress towards meeting any output and outcome measures identified in their application, as well as any other metrics requested by EDA and identified in the grant

special award conditions. Furthermore, recipients will be required to provide economic development impact reports to EDA at the end of the grant performance period, two years after the end of the grant performance period, and five years after the end of the grant performance period. As part of good performance practices, EDA may conduct program evaluations. If so, recipients of grants under this program may need to furnish performance data to evaluators, including but not limited to EDA staff and outside parties contracted by EDA. EDA may also, for research purposes linked to improving economic outcomes, choose to share data with other Federal partners, including but not limited to statistical agencies.

ii. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over $25,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. part 170 (2014), which can be accessed at http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr170_main_02.tpl.

iii. Government Performance and Results Act

EDA may require additional data on actual impact of the funded investment, pursuant to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), to be submitted to EDA up to nine years after the grant award.

iv. Information Sharing

For the purposes of achieving rigorous program evaluations, all applications (including those that are not selected for funding) may be shared with EDA staff and outside parties contracted by EDA for the purposes of evaluation.

d. Regulations, Administrative Requirements, and Cost Principles

Specific regulations, administrative requirements, and cost principles govern the use of EDA funds:

UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS EFFECTIVE DATE: Please note that on December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance titled Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements (OMB Uniform Guidance), which streamlines the language from eight existing OMB circulars, including Cost Principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A 122) and administrative requirements (OMB Circulars A-102 and A 110), into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. Note that the OMB Uniform Guidance supersedes DOC's uniform administrative requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24. In accordance with the Federal Register notice published on December 19, 2014 (79 FR 75871) and the regulation at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, the DOC adopted the OMB Uniform Guidance, codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, effective December 26, 2014, which means that the guidance applies to all new awards and to additional funding to existing awards made on or after December 26, 2014. In addition, the audit requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance apply to audits of non-Federal entities beginning on or after December 26, 2014. Therefore, applicants should familiarize themselves with 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which may be found at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-subtitleA-chapII-subchap-id302.pdf. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the OMB Uniform Guidance may be found at https://cfo.gov/cofar/.

e. EDA's Non-Relocation Policy

Applicants are advised that should an application be selected for award, the recipient will be required to adhere to a special award condition relating to EDA's non-relocation policy as follows:

> In signing this award of financial assistance, Recipient(s) attests that EDA funding is not intended by the Recipient to assist its efforts to induce the relocation of existing jobs within the U.S. that are located outside of its jurisdiction to within its jurisdiction in competition with other U.S. jurisdictions for those same jobs. In the event that EDA determines that its assistance was used for those purposes, EDA retains the right to pursue appropriate enforcement action in accord with the Standard Terms and Conditions of the Award, including suspension of disbursements and termination of the award for convenience or cause, which may include the establishment of a debt requiring the Recipient to reimburse EDA.

For purposes of ensuring that EDA assistance will not be used to merely transfer jobs from one location in the United States to another, each applicant must inform EDA of all employers that constitute primary beneficiaries of the project assisted by EDA. EDA will consider an employer to be a "primary beneficiary" if the applicant estimates that such employer will create or save 100 or more permanent jobs as a result of the investment assistance, provided that such employer also is specifically named in the application as benefiting from the project, or is or will be located in an EDA-assisted building, port, facility, or industrial, commercial, or business park constructed or improved in whole or in part with investment assistance prior to EDA's final disbursement of funds. In smaller communities, EDA may extend this policy to the relocation of 50 or more jobs.

f. OMB Uniform Guidance Audit Requirements

Single or program-specific audits shall be performed in accordance with the requirements contained in the OMB Uniform Guidance (see 2 CFR part 200, Subpart F, "Audit Requirements"). The OMB Uniform Guidance requires any non-Federal entity (i.e., nonprofit organizations, including nonprofit institutions of higher education and hospitals, states, local governments, and Indian Tribes) that expends federal awards of $750,000 or more in the recipient's fiscal year to conduct a single or program-specific audit in accordance with the requirements set out in the OMB Uniform Guidance. Applicants are reminded that EDA or the DOC's Office of Inspector General also may conduct an audit of an award at any time.

7. OTHER INFORMATION

a. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

The Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. §552 [hereinafter FOIA] and DOC's implementing regulations at 15 C.F.R. part 4 set forth the rules and procedures to make requested material, information, and records publicly available. Unless prohibited by law and to the extent permitted under FOIA, contents of applications submitted by applicants may be released in response to FOIA requests. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as "Privileged, Confidential, Commercial, or Financial Information." Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

b. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions

Unsatisfactory performance under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding. Failure to comply with any or all of the provisions of an award may have a negative impact on future funding by the DOC (or any of its operating units) may be considered grounds for any or all of the following actions: (1) establishing an account receivable; (2) withholding payments to the recipient under any DOC award(s); (3) changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only; (4) imposing

other special award conditions; (5) suspending any active DOC award(s); and (6) terminating any active DOC award(s).

c. Restrictions Governing Making Grants to Corporations Convicted of Felony Criminal Violations and/or Unpaid Federal Tax Liabilities

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, execution by an applicant of the Representation by Corporations Regarding an Unpaid Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Conviction Under Any Federal Law (*see* Appendix A) will be required in a format requested by EDA before any award will be made under this FFO.

d. Environmental and Historic Preservation Requirements

All applicants for EDA construction assistance (**including design and engineering assistance**) are required to provide adequate environmental information. Each application will be reviewed by EDA for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA). During the NEPA review process, applicants may be instructed to contact the designated State and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO/THPO), provide approvals from other governmental agencies, or provide more detailed environmental information. EDA, after compliance with requirements for consultation with Federally recognized Indian Tribes, may require applicants to participate in Tribal consultation, as necessary. The implementing regulations of NEPA require EDA to provide public notice of the availability of project-specific environmental documents, such as environmental impact statements, environmental assessments, findings of no significant impact, and records of decision, to the affected public.[9] For further guidance and information, please contact the representative listed in Section 8 of this FFO.

e. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under this FFO are subject to the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," if a State has adopted a process under EO 12372 to review and coordinate proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development (commonly referred to as the "single point of contact review process"). All applicants must give State and local governments a reasonable opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Project, including review and comment from area-wide planning organizations in metropolitan areas. To find out more about a State's process under EO 12372, applicants may contact their State's Single Point of Contact (SPOC). Names and addresses of some States' SPOCs are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's home page at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc. Question 19 of Form SF-424 allows applicants to demonstrate compliance with EO 12372.

f. Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The U.S. Department of Justice has issued revised regulations implementing Title II of the ADA (28 C.F.R. part 35; 75 FR 56164, as amended by 76 FR 13285) and Title III of the ADA (28 C.F.R. part 36; 75 FR 56164, as amended by 76 FR 13286). The revised regulations adopted new enforceable accessibility standards called the "2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design" (2010 Standards). The 2010 Standards are an acceptable alternative to the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). DOC deems compliance with the 2010 Standards to be an acceptable means of complying with the Section 504 accessibility requirements for new construction and alteration projects under 15 C.F.R. § 8b.18(c), as follows:

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[9] As specified in 40 C.F.R. §1506.6(b).

- Public Recipients subject to Title II of the ADA may use either the 2010 Standards or UFAS where the physical construction or alternations commence on or after September 15, 2010 and before March 15, 2012 (see 28 C.F.R. § 35.151(c)(2)); and
- Private Recipients subject to Title III of the ADA may use either the 2010 Standards or UFAS if the date when the last application for a building permit or permit extension is certified to be complete by a State, county, or local government (or, in those jurisdictions where the government does not certify completion of applications, if the date when the last application for a building permit or permit extension is received by the State, county, or local government) is on or after September 15, 2010 and before March 15, 2012, or if no permit is required, if the start of physical construction or alterations occurs on or after September 15, 2010 and before March 15, 2012 (see 28 C.F.R. § 36.406(a)(2)).

As of March 15, 2012, all new construction and alteration projects must comply with the 2010 Standards. In all cases, once a recipient selects an applicable ADA accessibility standard (i.e., the 2010 Standards or UFAS), that standard must be applied to the entire facility.

8. EDA CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions concerning this FFO or for more information about EDA programs, you may contact the appropriate EDA Regional Office RIS Point(s)-of-Contact (RO RIS POC(s)):

Regional Office	RO RIS POC(s)	Email	Phone
Atlanta	Robin Cooley	rcooley@eda.gov	(803) 253-3640
Austin	Chris Rys	crys@eda.gov	(512) 381-8159
Chicago	Bill Warren	wwarren@eda.gov	(312) 353-8143
Denver	Justin Fazzari	jfazzari@eda.gov	(303) 844-4089
Philadelphia	Chivas Grannum	cgrannum@eda.gov	(215) 316-2759
Seattle	Brian Parker	bparker2@eda.gov	(206) 220-7576

9. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION VIA GRANTS.GOV

a. Register Early and Submit Early

In order to submit an application through http://www.grants.gov/ (Grants.gov), an applicant must register for a Grants.gov user ID and password. Note that this process can take between three to five business days or as long as four weeks if all steps are not completed correctly. To avoid delays, EDA strongly recommends that applicants start early and not wait until the approaching deadline date before logging in, registering, reviewing the application instructions, and applying. Information about the Grants.gov registration process for organizations can be found at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html. Please note that organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their System for Award Management (SAM), which includes the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database, registration up-to-date through sam.gov or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov.

b. AOR Requirement

Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. As part of the registration process, you will register at least one Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) for your organization. THE AOR(S) MUST BE A PERSON OR PERSONS WHO HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE DOCUMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE ENTITY MAKING APPLICATION. AORs registered at Grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit

applications at Grants.gov so please ensure that your organization's application is submitted by an AOR. IF THE APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED BY ANYONE OTHER THAN YOUR ORGANIZATION'S AOR, IT WILL BE REJECTED BY THE GRANTS.GOV SYSTEM AND CANNOT BE CONSIDERED BY EDA. Note that a given organization may designate multiple individuals as AORs for Grants.gov purposes.

EDA will not accept late submissions caused by Grants.gov registration issues, including SAM and AOR issues.

Once an applicant is registered, the following list provides step-by-step instructions for accessing, completing, and submitting an application via Grants.gov. Please also read the instructions posted at Grants.gov.

1. Ensure that you have installed a compatible version of Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer, as incompatible versions of Adobe Acrobat Reader may cause errors. *See* http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html. Navigate to http://www.grants.gov/ and select "`Apply for Grants`" from the left-hand menu.
2. Select the link for "`Download a Grant Application`" package.
3. Enter Funding Opportunity Number "EDA-HDQ-OIE-2015- 2004566" and click "`Search.`"
4. Click on the "`Select Application Package to Download`" link under "`Actions`" for the instructions and application specific to the type of project and EDA program under which you are applying.
5. A new page should pop up. On that page, you may either enter your email address (in order to receive updates about this funding opportunity) or check the box that says "`No, I do not wish to provide my email address.`" Click "`Submit.`"
6. Two new links will appear. Click "`Download Application Instructions`" to review the instructions posted on Grants.gov, and click on "`Download Application Package`" when you are ready to begin the application.
7. Save the applicable application package to your computer or network drive. Note that the package file can be shared among multiple users; however, each user must have a compatible version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed in order to save changes to the application package.
8. The application package should pre-populate with all mandatory forms embedded.
9. To add "`Optional Documents`" to the application, click on the checkboxes next to the form name on the first page of the application package. Form SF-LLL is required and must be completed if non-Federal funds have been or are planned to be used for lobbying in connection with this competitive solicitation. If you will be submitting your application via Grants.gov, also check the box next to "`Attachments.`" The `Attachments` form allows applicants to attach any documents required as attachments under this competitive solicitation, such as a CEDS or letters of support.
10. Complete all mandatory fields (highlighted in yellow) on the forms. Note that mandatory fields will vary based on the type of applicant and the type of assistance sought. On Form CD-511, type "`not awarded yet`" in the "`project number`" field. Save the application package at regular intervals to avoid losing work.
11. Attach any required attachments. The preferred file format for attachments is portable document format (PDF); however, EDA will accept electronic files in Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or Excel formats.
12. When all mandatory fields have been completed, scroll to the top and click on "`Check Package for Errors.`"
13. Click "`Save.`"

14. Click "`Save and Submit.`" At this point the applicant's AOR must be connected to the Internet and will be asked to enter their Grants.gov user ID and password in order to submit via Grants.gov. As noted above, an AOR must submit the application for it to be validated by Grants.gov and received by EDA.

15.

c. Field Limitations and Special Characters

Please be advised that Grants.gov provides the following notice with respect to form field limitations and special characters:

i. Are There Restrictions on File Names for Any Attachment I Include with My Application Package?

Please limit file names to 50 characters and do not use special characters (example: `&,-,*,%,/,#`) in attachment names and application form fields (including periods (.), blank spaces, and accent marks) or attaching documents with the same name. An underscore (example: `my_Attached_File.pdf`) may be used to separate a file name. Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application may be rejected.

ii. What Kind of Information Can Be Entered into Form Fields Within My Application?

Grants.gov application packages offer fields to enter a set amount of data. When the limit is reached for a certain field, you will no longer be able to enter data into that field. For every form, there are different limitations to the data that you are allowed to enter (this varies between agency and form). Refer to the agency instructions available for download with the application package for more detail.

Do not use special characters (example: `&,-,*,%,/,#`) within the application form fields including periods (.), blank spaces, and accent marks; an underscore may be used. Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application may be rejected.

In EDA's experience, use of apostrophes (') in file names and fillable fields of required forms has resulted in application submission issues. Accordingly, please periodically check the status of your application to make sure it has been validated, and use file naming conventions that do not negatively affect your application submission.

If a response exceeds the field limit requirements of any form, including Form ED-900, the applicant is advised to include the response as an attachment to the application. The applicant should check the "`Attachments`" checkbox under "`Optional Documents for Submission`" box in the application package, and clearly indicate in the form field that the information is included as an electronic file.

d. Verify That Your Submission Was Successful

Applicants should save and print written proof of an electronic submission made at Grants.gov. Applicants can expect to receive multiple emails regarding the status of their submission. Since email communication can be unreliable, applicants must proactively check on the status of their application if they do not receive email notifications within a day of submission.

An applicant should expect to receive two initial emails from Grants.gov: the first will confirm receipt of the application, and the second will indicate that the application has either been successfully validated by the system before transmission to EDA or has been rejected due to errors. Because it can take up to two business days after Grants.gov receives an application for applicants to receive email notification of an

error, applicants should time their submissions to allow for application correction and resubmission by the deadline. Applicants will receive a third email once EDA has retrieved their applications.

EDA requests that applicants kindly refrain from submitting multiple copies of the same application package. Applicants should save and print both the confirmation screen provided on the Grants.gov website after the applicant has submitted an application, and the confirmation email sent by Grants.gov when the application has been successfully received and validated in the system. If an applicant receives an email from Grants.gov indicating that the application was received and subsequently validated, but does not receive an email from Grants.gov indicating that EDA has retrieved the application package within 72 hours of that email, the applicant may contact the representative listed in Section 8 of this announcement to inquire if EDA is in receipt of the applicant's submission.

It is the applicant's responsibility to verify that its submission was timely received and validated successfully at Grants.gov. To see the date and time your application was received, log on to Grants.gov and click on the "Track My Application" link from the left hand menu. For a successful submission, the application must be received and validated by Grants.gov, and an agency tracking number assigned. If the date and time your application is validated and time stamped by Grants.gov is later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the, your application is late. If your application has a status of "Received" it is awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will change to "Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/encountering-error-messages.html.

e. Grants.gov Systems Issues

If you experience a Grants.gov "systems issue" (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before the deadline, please (i) print any error message received; (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at (800) 518-4726 for immediate assistance; and (iii) contact EDA using the contact information in Section 8 of this FFO prior to the deadline for receipt of applications. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. Please note: problems with an applicant organization's computer system or equipment are not considered "systems issues." Similarly, an applicant's failure to (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered AOR submits the application, or (iii) notice receipt of an email message from Grants.gov are not considered systems issues. A Grants.gov "systems issue" is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of a confirmed "systems issue," EDA reserves the right to accept an application in an alternate format; however, all applications must be received by the deadline. Late applications will not be accepted

Applicants should access the following link for assistance in navigating Grants.gov and for a list of useful resources: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html. The following link lists frequently asked questions (FAQs): http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html. If you do not find an answer to your question under the "Applicant FAQs," try consulting the "Applicant User Guide" or contacting Grants.gov by email at support@grants.gov or telephone at (800) 518-4726. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

APPENDIX A: REPRESENTATION BY CORPORATIONS REGARDING AN UNPAID DELINQUENT TAX LIABILITY OR A FELONY CONVICTION UNDER ANY FEDERAL LAW

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, none of the appropriated funds made available by relevant appropriations Acts may be used to issue a financial assistance award to any corporation that:

- was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, unless any agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interest of the Government; and/or,
- has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless an agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interest of the Government.

For purposes of the below certification, a corporation is defined as an entity that has filed articles of incorporation in one of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, or the various territories of the United States including American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Midway Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Republic of Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. (Note that this includes both for-profit and non-profit organizations.)

The below certification is required for all new financial assistance awards, and for all amendments to existing financial assistance awards, that are made to corporations (as defined above) and that are funded with appropriated funds made available to the Department of Commerce pursuant to relevant appropriations Acts. This certification is further required to the extent that other appropriation Acts contain the same or substantively similar prohibitions against the issuance of financial assistance awards to certain corporations.

Instructions: All recipients that are corporations (as defined above) must complete paragraphs (1) and (2) below, which must be signed below by an authorized representative of the corporation. Recipients that are not corporations are not required to complete this representation.

(1) _____ [insert name of corporation] certifies that it is ☐ is not ☐ (check one) a corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under a Federal law within the 24 months preceding the signature date of this Representation.

(2) _____ [insert name of corporation] certifies that it is ☐ is not ☐ (check one) a corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreements with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.

By: _____

[Typed name and title of the signing individual]

[Typed phone number of the signing individual]

[Typed email address of the signing individual]

Date: _____

APPENDIX B: TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVELS SCALE

Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) Scale to Be Applied by EDA Grantees		
TRL Level	Definition	Questions to Be Answered and Reported
1	Basic principles observed and reported	• What research has been conducted, where, when, and by whom? • What research papers and publications have reported the results?
2	Technology concept and/or application formulated	• What research has been conducted, where, when, and by whom? • What research papers and publications have reported possible applications?
3	Proof-of-concept validated through experiment or analysis	• What research has been conducted, where, when, and by whom? • What test results have been reported? • How do they compare to analytical predictions?
4	Component and/or system/sub-system validated in a relevant laboratory environment	• What research has been conducted, where, when, and by whom? • What are the results of component/sub-system tests in laboratory setting?
5	Component and/or system/sub-system validated in a relevant commercial environment	• What were the results of testing a complete system in a simulated operational environment? • How do the test results compare with expectations? • What problems, if any, were encountered? Was the system/sub-system refined to match expected system goals?
6	System/subsystem prototype demonstrated in a relevant laboratory environment	• What were the results of testing a complete system/prototype at required specifications? • How did the test compare with expectations? • What problems were encountered? • What are the plans or actions to resolve problems?
7	System/subsystem prototype demonstrated in a commercial environment	• What were the results from testing a prototype system in an operational environment? • How did the test compare with expectations? • What problems were encountered? • What are the plans or actions to resolve problems?
8	Actual system completed and qualified through testing and demonstration in a commercial setting	• What were the results of testing the system in its final configuration in a commercial setting? • Did it meet its operational requirements? What problems were encountered? • What are the plans or actions to resolve problems?
9	Actual system proven through successful operation in a commercial setting	• What were the results of operating the technology in a commercial setting, using standard process metrics?

APPENDIX C: OPTIONAL CHECKLIST-STYLE GUIDE FOR REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1.   For States, Indian Tribes, Cities, and Other Political Subdivisions of States

The following checklist table is meant to assist applicants that are States, Indian tribes, cities, and other political subdivisions of cities (including consortia of one or more of these types of entities). As set forth in Section 4(b)(i) of this FFO, all documents are required for a complete application.

Note that this list DOES NOT APPLY to nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher learning, public-private partnerships, science or research parks, Federal laboratories, or economic development or similar organizations. For these organizations, see Section 2 of Appendix C of this FFO.

Document Checklist for States, Indian Tribes, Cities, and Other Political Subdivisions of States		
Document	Title/Description/Requirements	Complete and Included?
Form SF-424	Application for Federal Assistance	
Form SF-424A	Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs	
Form SF-424B	Assurances-Non-Construction Programs	
Form CD-511	Certification Regarding Lobbying	
Form SF-LLL	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	
Project Narrative	*See* Section 4(b)(iv) of this FFO	
Budget Narrative	*See* Section 4(b)(v) of this FFO	
Comments from the State Clearinghouse	*See* http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc	
Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Agreement	*See* Section 4(b)(ii) of this FFO	
SAM ID	*See* Section 4(b)(iii) of this FFO	

2. For Nonprofit Organizations, Institutions of Higher Learning, Public-Private Partnerships, Science or Research Parks, Federal Laboratories, Economic Development or Similar Organizations

The following checklist table is meant to assist applicants that are nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher learning, public-private partnerships, science or research parks, Federal laboratories, or economic development or similar organizations (as well as consortia that include one or more of these types of entities). As set forth in Section 4(b)(i) of this FFO, all documents are required for a complete application.

Document Checklist for Nonprofit Organizations, Institutions of Higher Learning, Public-Private Partnerships, Science or Research Parks, Federal Laboratories, Economic Development or Similar Organizations		
Document	Title/Description/Requirements	Complete and Included?
Form SF-424	Application for Federal Assistance	
Form SF-424A	Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs	
Form SF-424B	Assurances-Non-Construction Programs	
Form CD-511	Certification Regarding Lobbying	
Form SF-LLL	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	
Project Narrative	*See* Section 4(b)(iv) of this FFO	
Budget Narrative	*See* Section 4(b)(v) of this FFO	
Comments from the State Clearinghouse	*See* http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc	
Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Agreement	*See* Section 4(b)(ii) of this FFO	
SAM ID	*See* Section 4(b)(iii) of this FFO	
Certificate of Good Standing	Less than 12 months old; from the State of incorporation	
Articles of Incorporation	Formation documents	
By-Laws	n/a	
Support Letters	From the State(s) or political subdivision(s) of a State supporting the application	